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Education Committee

**HB 6842: An Act Concerning the Establishment of a Local Food for Schools Incentive Program and Expansion of The CT Grown for CT Kids Grants Program**

**Gail Cairns-Sharry**

Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, and Connecticut General Assembly members of the Education Committee. My name is Gail Cairns-Sharry and I am the Food Service Director of the New Haven Public Schools, Food Services Department. Today, I am writing on HB 6842: An Act Concerning the Establishment of a Local Food for Schools Incentive Program and Expansion of The CT Grown for CT Kids Grants Program and to ask for your support in moving this bill forward.

New Haven Public Schools students have expressed interest in creating a more environmentally conscious school district. They have specifically requested that our schools include more locally grown foods. There are many opportunities to include more locally grown produce, as every school in New Haven has a salad bar featuring a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. This year we have worked with our produce vendor to highlight some of the local and regional farms that our district uses. CT Local Food for Schools Incentive Program would allow us to expand our efforts and better address the needs of our students.

- The state will reimburse a district \$1 for every \$2 they spend on CT Grown Product and \$1 for every \$3 they spend on regionally produced food
- More federal school meal dollars will be redirected to our local economy
- The program will help addresses inequities by prioritizing purchasing relationships with small and socially disadvantaged farmers
- Technical assistance and training for districts (food service depts, cooks, etc) and farmers will provide the supports to make the program a success
- This will help address concerns voiced by parents, students, and teachers about the types of school food available.
- This also addresses points in both the [City's Climate Emergency Resolution](#) (2019) and the [BOE's Climate Emergency Resolution](#) (Sept 2022)

I urge you to support this funding for this program - it's a win-win investment for our youth, farms, and schools. Thank you for your time and service.

*Gail Cairns-Sharry – Food Service Director*

*New Haven Public Schools*